



THE NEWSPAPER OF THE OWEN OWEN GROUP

Scene

SUMMER 1976

THEY WON AWARDS

A YEAR OF GROWTH IN BRITAIN AND CANADA



Mr. Mariner



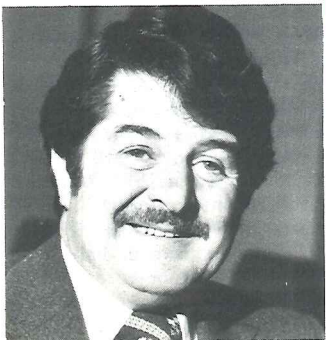
Miss Stone

The Chairman's award went to Mr. J. A. Mariner—Regional Director of the Southern stores, Bath, Taunton, Weston-super-Mare, Hereford, Newport, Southampton, Brighton and Richmond.

Buyers awards went to Miss J. Stone, Perfumery Buyer and Miss J. Pearce, Buyer of Knitwear and Blouses. A special award went to Mr. J. H. Little, Butchery controller at Coventry.



Miss Pearce



Mr. Little

Your company made important strides forward in 1975. In November we acquired eight additional department stores which have brought the number of retail outlets in this country to 23 and increased our selling area by nearly one-third. In Canada, the fifth Robinson store was opened in September, the first outside the Greater Hamilton area, and has added one-quarter to Canadian selling space. These developments on both sides of the Atlantic are exhilarating and, as their full potential is exploited, we are confident they will make an important contribution to the future growth of your company.

This was the opening paragraph of the Chairman's statement sent to all shareholders with the company's accounts for the year to January last—a year in which group sales increased by 36 per cent and group profits by 30 per cent.

It was, however, a year of contrasts, particularly in the U.K.

U.K. Stores

In the U.K. stores the first half-year showed a great improvement in trading results, with sales up by 32 per cent at a time of high inflation and under the impetus given to sales by the prior notice of impending increases in VAT rates.

In the second half-year the rate of sales increase fell to 21 per cent,



Mr. G. G. Wilson

and operating costs rose at an alarming pace so that profits were barely maintained despite the very considerable increase in sales.

This trend of falling profitability has continued so far in the current trading year, with sales only slightly up on the very high levels achieved in 1975 and with cost increases still running at high levels, reflecting principally of course the wage increases granted last year to meet the increased cost of living.

The new stores acquired last November from Maple Macowards Limited are achieving good sales performances, but still have some way to go to reach the levels of sales per square foot achieved in the established stores. The accompanying sketch map shows the locations of the U.K. department stores and the much improved spread

which has resulted from this latest acquisition.

Canada

In Canada, trading through the year was much more consistent with steady progress being maintained in sales throughout the year,



Mr. F. W. Dakin

a first half sales increase of 22 per cent being followed by a second half sales increase of 41 per cent in the four established stores.

The new St. Catharines store, opened in September, got off to a very satisfactory start and achieved a small profit after meeting all its pre-opening expenses.

Inflation helped sales in Canada to some extent (though the rate of inflation was less than half that in the U.K.), but in Canada too there is now a comprehensive government anti-inflation programme with price and wage controls even more stringent than those in the U.K.

Plumb Contracts

Plumbs had a very difficult year as activity in the shopfitting and construction industry continued to decline.



Mr. T. Doyle



Chairman, Mr. John Norman

Despite every effort to obtain orders, both at home and overseas, and to maintain employment, in the end activity had to be reduced and the company made only a minimal contribution to group profits.

Concluding his statement to shareholders, the Chairman said:

"At this early stage in the year one must take a cautious view of the immediate outlook. Just as retail profits receive a spurious boost in the early stages of rising inflation, so they come under pressure when the country's economy is finally driven into recession. Consumer spending has to suffer.

"During the initial weeks of the new trading year the physical volume of business has been running below

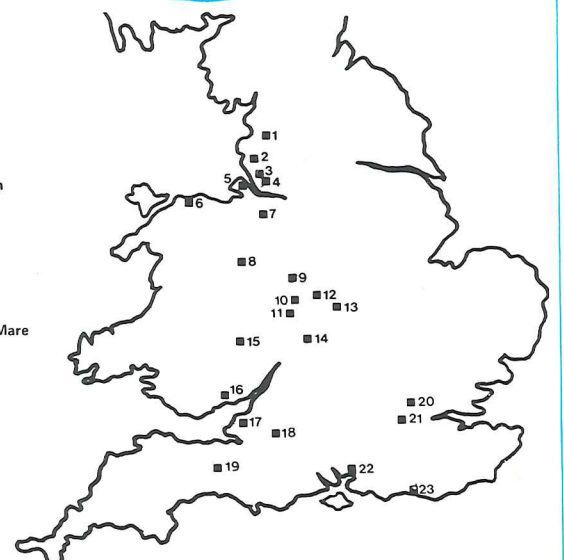
the 1975 levels, even though sales by value remain ahead, and this must have its effect on the results of the first six months.

"But comparison with the early exceptionally high spending months of last year could be a misleading pointer to the results of the full year. From May onwards the comparison will be much less extreme and by the same token we can expect the present high level of percentage cost increase to abate.

"You may be sure that all our efforts are directed towards maintaining the group's progress and, as the new stores gather momentum, they should begin to realise their profit potential."

Where they Are

- 1 Preston
- 2 Bootle
- 3 Liverpool
- 4 Liverpool
- 5 Birkenhead
- 6 Colwyn Bay
- 7 Chester
- 8 Shrewsbury
- 9 Wolverhampton
- 10 Stourbridge
- 11 Kidderminster
- 12 Erdington
- 13 Coventry
- 14 Evesham
- 15 Hereford
- 16 Newport
- 17 Weston-Super-Mare
- 18 Bath
- 19 Taunton
- 20 Finchley
- 21 Richmond
- 22 Southampton
- 23 Brighton



Space Age Techniques Speed Up Sales

ALL (CASH) SYSTEMS "GO" AT CLAYTON SQUARE

Thirty-five electronic cash registers installed at the Clayton Square store have harnessed Space Age techniques to speed up management information by 700 per cent. And if the experiment, started on April 5, continues as successfully as it has begun it is possible that the scheme will, in time, be extended to other stores. We are the first store group to use an existing computer with N.C.R. and the first to devise completely its own system.

The operation has involved management and staff from the store, from the Computer Department, and from Central Credit Office and Central Check Office, along with the Property Department who worked on the technical installation.

Congratulations

Miss Ona Moulding the company's Management Services Director, said that the store management and staff and the computer personnel were to be congratulated upon launching a complex operation so successfully.

What does it all mean to the company?

The 35 electronic cash registers have a number of keys which register the amount of the item being sold, the amount tendered by the customer, the type, size and colour of the merchandise (if this is applicable), the time of day when the sale was made and other facts which will be useful in management analysis.

Miles of Cable

The 35 terminals replaced 48 conventional cash registers and miles of cable had to be installed by the Property Department to connect the terminals with the data collector in the store. On April 5, after all the work had been done, the changeover was effected without any significant difficulty.

All the information keyed into the terminals goes onto a 600 ft magnetic tape in the data collector and each evening this tape is collected by a security man and taken to the computer centre in head office.

Here it is processed overnight and by nine o'clock the next morning a number of reports are on the desk of Mr. Henry Cotton, Clayton Square's Director and General Manager.

Reports

The reports that can now be examined by the buying team and the store management are:

- Total store sales on the previous day compared with the same day in the previous year.

- Sales for each department compared with the previous year.
- The volume of sales of a particular item.

points out, the benefits in terms of time saved, better buying and sales information and greater accuracy are already apparent.

Into the Space Age — Left to right: Mr. P. Finn with computer programmers Mr. D. Wharton, Mr. C. Irvine and Mrs. I. Lowcock.



- The number of customers in each hour at each station. This gives the peak sales periods during the day.
- Popularity of particular styles.
- Any "overs" or "shorts" at any of the terminals (although the terminal is programmed so that it is now difficult for the sales staff to give the wrong change or charge the wrong price).

Because the terminals are so sensitive it is necessary to train sales staff and managers in their use and this was the job of Mrs. Rose Mortenson, the Store Trainer at Clayton Square. The smoothness of the operation is testimony to her effective planning and training.

The electronic terminals connecting to a computer have also been launched in our Canadian stores.

The experimental system will be carefully assessed over the next 12 months but, as Miss Moulding

SAILING KEEPS CHRIS IN TOP FORM

When Chris Hassall isn't working, he's working. At least that's how most people would view his activities. He enjoys working in his job as assistant to Mr. Barkway,

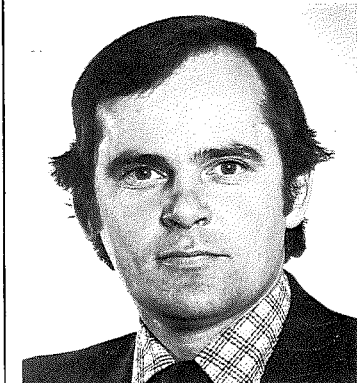
the Household Merchandise director, which he took on in January.

And he enjoys sailing, even though he has been working hard on rebuilding his three-ton sloop, *Nesta*.

"Undoubtedly my job and sailing are the two main interests in my life although I enjoy helping my wife in the garden," says 39 year old Mr. Hassall.

Salesman

Born in Hoylake and educated at Rydal College, North Wales, he followed his father into the store business as a salesman in the soft furnishing department of Lewis's store in Birmingham. He later worked in Manchester and Blackpool and served in practically every department except Food.



Mr. C. Hassall

He joined Maple Macowards where he became executive in charge of retail store operations, based in the London head office. When the stores in the Maple Macowards group were bought by Owen Owen Chris Hassall came to Owen Owen's head office.

He and his wife have lived at Ashton near Delamere Forest for nine years. "I've had my home on Merseyside for many years even when I was working from London" says Mr. Hassall.

He has belonged to Hoylake Sailing Club since he was a boy and takes part in offshore races as a member of Liverpool Bay Sailing Association.

Midnight Race

His timber-built sloop has been entered in this month's midnight race from the Mersey to the Isle of Man and many more events during the summer.

"I like sailing because it is completely relaxing. It might be physically tiring but it is mentally refreshing and leaves you in really good form to start work on Monday morning."

CARPET DEPARTMENT



Farewell Doncaster

On Saturday, March 27, we said goodbye to Owen Owen in Doncaster after an association lasting over 25 years. Doncaster store has been acquired by Binns Limited, part of the House of Fraser, in exchange for Wrights of Richmond store.

Many directors and senior

management have spent part of their careers in the Doncaster store. Former general managers include Mr. A. B. Disley, Warehouse and Transport Controller and Mr. A. Simpkin, Regional Director. Former sales managers include Mr. V. W. Baylis, Merchandise Director; Mr. W. McDonald, Bedding Buyer,

Mr. D. Stevenson, Buyer of Kitchen Furniture, Gifts and Sewing Machines.

On Thursday, March 25, our chairman, Mr. John Norman, and our Trading Director, Mr. H. W. Plumb, visited the store to say 'goodbye' to the staff. Mr. Norman also presented long service awards to Miss B. Gray, Mrs. L. McCrystal and Mrs. E. Riley.

We wish all our former colleagues health and prosperity in the years ahead.

45 Years' Service



Sylvia Goddard

Miss Sylvia Goddard, Merchandise Office Supervisor at our Clayton Square store has retired after 45 years with the company.

She started her career in December 1930 as a cashier in the Dissecting Office and rose to her position after serving as Invoice Office Supervisor.



JUST THE DRILL!

Jeffrey Moore has been indentured as an Apprentice Joiner with Plumb Contracts since July 31, 1972. He had already been chosen as the Apprentice of the Year for 1975 and had been presented with a scroll and prize by Owen Owen chairman Mr. John Norman, and his name permanently registered in the Boardroom.

His skill has been further rewarded by a cheque from the National Federation of Master Builders for obtaining the Advanced Craft certificate in carpentry and joinery.

25 Year Awards



Left to right: Mr. Powell, Miss Johnson, Mr. Traynor, Mrs. Forbes, Miss Caffrey, Miss Malcolm, Miss Justin and Mr. Collins.

Congratulations to the following members of staff who have attained 25 years service.

They are:

- Mr. S. Bristow—Bath
- Miss J. Caffrey—Audley House
- Mr. L. J. Collins—Birkenhead
- Mr. G. J. Cross—Southampton
- Mrs. E. Forbes—London Road
- Miss B. Gray—Doncaster
- Miss E. Johnson—Birkenhead

- Miss E. M. Justin—London Road
- Miss J. Malcolm—London Road
- Mrs. L. McCrystal—Doncaster
- Miss B. Pickering—Southampton
- Mr. R. P. Powell—Clayton Square
- Mrs. E. Riley—Doncaster
- Mr. W. Stothart—Stafford House
- Mr. T. J. Traynor—London Road

NEW RICHMOND STORE WILL BE BIG ASSET

Plans are under way for the introduction of new departments and other improvements which will make our new Richmond store a great asset to the group.

Anne's bedside manner



Bedding Consultant Ann Stalker is a woman who never falls asleep on the job. She is too busy advising customers. And for Mrs. Stalker this means finding out as much as she can about their health, age, weight, size of their homes and bedrooms and a bit about the lives they lead.

A consultant for Silentnight, working at Owen Owen in Liverpool, she knows how important a good bed is. "People are often perplexed when they come to me," she said. "It may be 15 or 20 years since they last bought a bed and now they face inflation as well as the intricacies of modern mattress development."

But Mrs. Stalker does not believe in the fast sell. "I like to find the bed that is suited to the customer," she added.

The store became part of the group on March 27 in an exchange deal with the House of Fraser. They acquired the Owen Owen store in Doncaster.

House of Fraser

The initiative for the deal came from the House of Fraser who had already taken over the premises adjoining our Doncaster store and were very keen to expand.

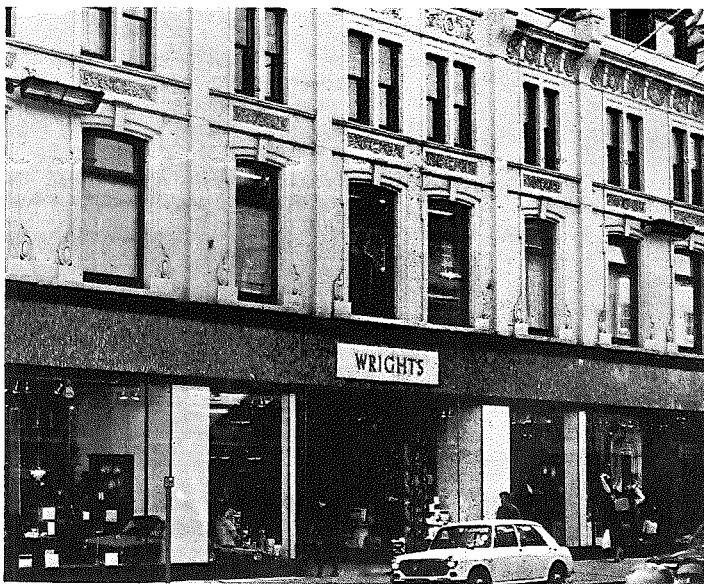
Situated in one of the best locations in the busy South London township of Richmond, the new store has a selling area of more than 43,000 square feet on four selling floors, and carries a wide range of selling departments. It should have tremendous potential as part of the Owen Owen group.

The building itself has some unique architectural features, including a solid bronze wall frame and solid copper window frames.

Buying Office Move

And the first new department moved in, in early April. The London fashion buying office moved from Kingsway House in Central London to new offices on the third floor of the Richmond store, which had previously been occupied by the Hide head office.

Control of the store has changed frequently over the past 25 years. By 1950 Wright Brothers was part of the Great Northern & Southern Stores group, which then merged with Hide & Co. In 1964 The Hide Group was acquired by Calico Printers which, in turn, became part of Tootal Limited. Last year, Tootal sold the Hide Group stores to The House of Fraser.



D-I-Y DELIVERY

Store nurse Judith Lynch proved just how handy she is when a mother to be went into labour in the Do-it-yourself department of T. J. Hughes in London Road, Liverpool.

She called for an ambulance and prepared herself for what would have been the strangest delivery the store had ever seen.

But in the nick of time the ambulance arrived and raced the mother away to Liverpool Maternity Hospital.

And three weeks later she returned to the store with baby Jason to say a big thank you to Judith.

Doctors from the hospital also telephoned to add their praise. "She was absolutely marvellous," they said.

HAPPY FAMILIES AT FINCHLEY

We've always said that Finchley was a Family Store—well now we've got the proof.

There are three sets of mothers and daughters working in the store, well one's a daughter-in-law. We have the Spiros and the Collins on the Fashion Floor, and the Minellas in the Baby/Fabric Department. Then we have a mother and son—the Laws. Mrs. Law works in the office and her son works on the Audio Department.

Two Cousins

We follow that by an uncle and niece team—the Reads; uncle being Mr. A. Read our House Manager, niece Miss Sandra Read, who works on China. Then come the two cousins

who work in the office, Mrs. Cornwall and Mrs. Richards.

Not content to rest there, we bring romance into the store with the husband and wife Ranniklal and Jaya Shah who also work there. Ranniklal is on Menswear and Jaya is on Fashion Fabrics. Finally, we have the fiancées, Colin Hackett, Sales Manager of the Top Floor and Val Kilby, Assistant Sales Manager of the Hardware and China Departments in the basement. Colin and Val have now named the day so we've a wedding in February '77 to look forward to.

Wrong number — right idea!

The Wolverhampton telephone number—28011—is similar to another store in Wolverhampton, which is 29011.

One day the operator was asked; "Is that Clarksons?" She replied, "No, sorry madam, Owen Owen, but can we help you?" The customer replied, "Maybe."

So the operator discovered what the customer required and connected the lady to the appropriate department where she purchased £50 worth of goods.

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 Droop, 4 Crane, 7 Rio, 8 Store, 9 Olive, 10 Resound, 11 Egg, 12 Bee, 14 Pension, 16 Tots, 17 Tatt, 18 Eke, 19 Dread, 20 Doris.
DOWN: 1 Distributed, 2 Ovals, 3 Pre-supposed, 4 Coordinated, 5 Anise, 6 Emergencies, 13 Evoke, 15 Inter.

Last month (May) the name "Owen Owen" appeared for the first time in Shrewsbury's main shopping street. And without exception it was welcomed by staff and townsfolk alike. Store staff—about 120 of them—find they have a bigger range of merchandise to sell, and customers appreciate the fact.

Above all, since the Shrewsbury store came into the group last November, the turnover (in the words of general manager Laurence Priestley) has increased dramatically. "You can literally see the changes happening in the store and at the present rate trade will go through the roof! The take-over by Owen Owen is the best thing that ever happened to Shrewsbury."

The story below explains why . . .

STORE WITH HISTORY LOOKS AHEAD TO NEW HEIGHTS

It was 114 years ago that a local draper, Richard Maddox moved his business to Shrewsbury's High Street and began a story to which its most important chapters are now being written.

"Richard Maddox, Wholesale and Retail Linen and Wool Draper, Haberdasher, Hosier and Glover. Family Mourning. Funerals Furnished". That was the style of the business that opened up at 26 and 27 High Street in 1862, when Mr. Maddox was assisted by his two nieces in setting out laces, flowers, ribbons and fabrics. Muslins at sixpence a yard and satin at six shillings.

new ownership. He has spent all his working life in department stores. First with Lewis's, later Debenhams, then Alexon shops before joining Maple Macowards.

Odd Feature

An unusual—and successful—feature of the Shrewsbury store—is its Miss Selfridge shop which competes with the store's own Separates department. A. S. M.

Handbags. "In those early days everything was an allocation and it was a question of getting as much as you could." When she took in hosiery, cosmetics and prams she got a £2 rise to £8 a week. She was also responsible for window dressing.

Tyrant

"I know I was considered a tyrant by the staff. I worked hard—sometimes I would put on a white overall and clean the department because I wasn't satisfied with the work of the cleaners—and I expected my staff to work hard, too.

Today Miss Kay works only three days a week on the selling floor, where she recalls that in days gone by customers included names like Lady Forester and the Duchess of Delagrache who were greeted by a doorman with a cocked hat. "We would sell lace handkerchiefs at £10 apiece or a blouse in guipure lace (2 coupons) or a blouse (5 coupons) at up to £25.

When the firm changed hands the previous directors presented Miss Kay with a £1,000 cheque and a portable T.V. in recognition of her tremendous work. Two other ladies,

New Feature

She has been involved in the re-organisation of the Ground Floor which now has counters for Estee Lauder, Max Factor and Revlon. Clinique will come in August.

Mr. George Ward, 64, a salesman in Furniture recalls that when he joined the store as an apprentice, the 'living-in' quarters for the staff, in the attic, had closed only 12 months earlier. That was in 1927. It's now used by the Display department as a store.

In the old Carpet department an apprentice had to polish the oak floor by pulling a heavy padded polisher with bed irons and two lengths of webbing to rub in the linseed oil.

"We wore black jackets and striped trousers. During his first year he received six shillings a week—and glad to get it at a time when jobs were hard to get.

"We used to send vanloads of stuff out to the stately homes on appro. If they chose anything it could take up to 12 months before they paid."

Old Timbers

Merchandise manager Philip Griffiths, 23, came from our Doncaster

undoubtedly been very favourable."

Mr. Griffiths is sharing an old-world oak-beamed cottage outside Shrewsbury with Stewart Davy, S.M. Menswear and Haberdashery—who came from Clayton Square where he was a management trainee.

Mr. Graham Austin—better known as Ossy—S.M. Hardware, China, Gifts, Gardening and Stainless Steel—has spent 40 years in retailing and 20 of them in the Shrewsbury Store. He started at 10 shillings a week when the top man in his department was only earning £3 plus commission.

From School

And one of the newest members of staff is 17 year old Julia Howells who only started a year ago straight from school.

Her brother was working in the store as a carpenter and told her what a pleasant place it was. She has noticed one big change since Owen Owen took over. "Previously we were having to say 'Sorry, we don't stock it.' Now we have a much better choice and if, by chance we don't have an item in stock we say, 'We'll try to get it for you!'"

But behind the scenes is the voice of our Shrewsbury store. Anyone phoning Owen Owen at Shrewsbury will get the most delightful reception. For on the switchboard is a woman who not only loves her job but feels it is the most important first contact between a customer and the store.

Mrs. Rosemary Littlehales is the reason that her sister, Miss Eallett is known as Miss Kay. Mrs. Littlehales was already working in Maddox' as a junior sales girl when her sister joined. There couldn't be two Miss Ealletts—hence Miss Kay. But young Rosemary often crept away from the sales floor to watch the switchboard operator at work: "I was fascinated," she says: "My only ambition was to be Maddox's telephone operator." Eventually her ambition was achieved in 1956. In 1962 she left for domestic reasons for a period of two years but has been the store's "Hello Girl" ever since.

Those, then, are just a few of the people who make up the team in one of Owen Owen's newest—but oldest—stores.

Lots More

We haven't space to tell you about the four Display girls who dress the 21 windows . . . the staff of the Ladies' Hairdressing salon . . . the ladies of the Fashion department . . . the new Carpet section . . . the Gardening department which is thriving in the home town of T.V. gardener Percy Thrower . . . the Berketex Bridal Shop which can claim to sell more than any other Bridal shop outside London . . . the 26,000 ft. of selling area on which more than £500,000 was spent when the historic but derelict Walker Printing Office was acquired to connect the two older shops . . . the exposed old beams . . . the fact that architects from overseas visit the store just to see how a sixteenth-century building can be adapted to modern selling.

It's an historic combination of buildings. And the twentieth-century folk who now run it could well be helping to make retail history that would make Richard Maddox gasp.



Mr. Laurence Priestley (second left) general manager of the Shrewsbury store with some members of his staff

Flourished

Within five years the business had flourished and the firm had extended the premises round the corner to Pride Hill. The High Street and Pride Hill premises, dating back to the 1590's, were separated by Walker's printing office which was only acquired a few years ago.

By 1949 the Maddox family interest in the business ended and later it became part of the Maple Macoward Group, from whom it was acquired by Owen Owen last year.

Mr. Priestley (39) who has been at the store since 1973 welcomed the

Mary Duffy, aged 20, welcomes the competition. Since Owen Owen took over we have a lot more merchandise for the younger girls and women and our trade is growing. Mary started at the store five years ago in Hardware and China, left for three months two years ago but quickly returned.

At the other end of her career is Miss Margaret Eallett (store name Miss Kay) who has seen the pattern of trade change over a period of more than 30 years—most of them as a buyer. She started in Fancies and later was appointed buyer of



Mr. Freddie Franks (left), despatch supervisor and Mr. George Ward (right), furniture salesman, looking at some of the old timbers dating back nearly 400 years in the middle section of the store.

Mrs. Thomas, the workroom manager, and Miss Margaret Oakley, the head cleaner received £200 cheques for their service to the company.

Another long serving member of the staff is Mr. Freddie Franks, Despatch supervisor who started at the store over 35 years ago . . . and he still has another 15 years to go before retirement!

Sue Galton, the Estee Lauder consultant has been in the store nine years and Miss Daphne McQueen, S.M. Ground Floor came as manageress Cosmetics six and a half years ago. She has since spent five years as Buyer.

store last December for the first day of the January sales. Before his two years as merchandise manager at Doncaster he had spent five years at Chester and feels that the old timbers and atmosphere of the Shrewsbury store is akin to that of Chester.

"Everyone here is so very friendly. You might expect that people working in a place which has just been taken over might resent any change but here the staff really seem to be welcoming the improvements which Owen Owen are carrying out—particularly in widening the range of merchandise. The reactions have



Miss Mary Duffy, A.S.M., Separates, with Miss Janice Bencon.

Working behind the scenes

Our stores would never run as smoothly as they do without the behind the scenes work put in by our maintenance men. So for this edition of 'Scene' we asked stores to send us details of their backroom boys.

George Ellis came to our Birkenhead store from overseas in August 1959. He was looking for a temporary job, but he stayed until November 1965, when he moved to Canada.

But he missed his friends in Birkenhead and after two years he returned to be offered his old job back.

Another George, George Hughes is house manager at our store in Bootle New Strand. He is helped by Frank Williams who has been with the company since he left school in 1962.

New Flag

Frank recalls the time he was hoisting a new flag above the store in pouring rain. He struggled for half an hour against the wind only to find that the flag was twice the size of the pole.

There was a surprise in store for Dick Sizeland when he came for an interview for a maintenance job at our Preston store.

For he found out that the house manager was his old school friend and neighbour Bill Parr, whom he had not seen for 25 years. Dick, who spent the 25 years in the army got the job and now the two of them have renewed their friendship and they are busy catching up on the time they lost.

Bill has been house manager at the store since 1968.

Two Weeks

Jim Williams came to our Newport store 16 months ago to do a two week painting job. But he found life in a department store so interesting that he agreed to stay on as maintenance man.

A keen writer Jim is very proud of the fact that his first book is being published next week. A romantic novel, entitled "Snowflakes in the Wind," it is based on the history of his own family from 1834 to 1933.

Maintenance work at Wolverhampton is in the able hands of Mr. Kris Muszynski who joined the company in 1969.

T. J. Hughes

Longest serving is Mr. A. Pye who joined us in 1932 as a duty man. He was promoted to supervisor in 1953 and he is now house supervisor.

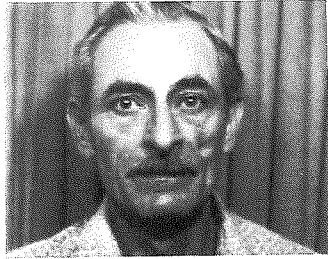
Mr. T. Finnigan started in 1934 as a ticket collector in the Grotto and then moved to store porters. In 1964 he became a duty man and he is now cleaning supervisor.

Mr. J. Crane joined the com-

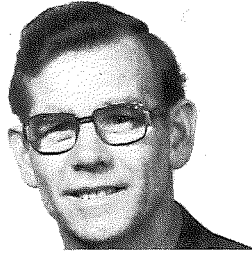
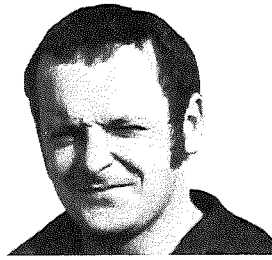
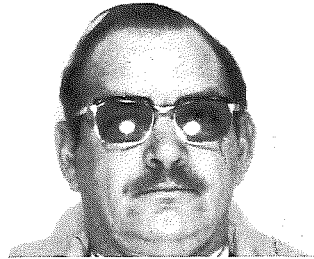
pany in 1935 and served in the army during the war. He is retiring this month.

Mr. R. Meakin joined us in 1955 as a painter in technical services. And Mr. W. O'Brien started work the following year as a maintenance labourer. Mr. J. Clark joined in 1953. Mr. W. Fleming came to the stockroom in 1959 and the following year became a boiler man. He is now an electrician's mate.

Electrician Mr. G. Rees joined as an apprentice in 1962. Mr. J. Walker joined as an electrician in 1963. He is now technical services supervisor.



Mr. Harrison Bryant with some of the staff outside the store.



Top to bottom: Mr. Jim Williams, Mr. Dick Sizeland, Mr. Bill Parr, Mr. Kris Muszynski and Mr. George Ellis.



London Road Maintenance Team: Back row left to right: Mr. A. Pye, Mr. G. Rees, Mr. W. Fleming, Mr. J. Crane, Mr. R. Meakin. Front row left to right: Mr. J. Walker, Mr. T. Finnegan, Mr. W. O'Brien.



A PARCEL OF FRIENDS!

Our Colwyn Bay staff can't boast the biggest store in the group—but when it comes to being the friendliest they reckon they come out top every time.

And although they have only been in the group for six months they are already proving that their formula for success is a winner.

"We are just a parcel of friends," explains general manager Mr. George Harrison Bryant. "Being a small store everyone here knows each other very well and we all get on with each other."

Reputation

The store was founded in 1912 and its popularity has grown ever since. It joined Owen Owen last year and now, says Mr. Bryant, "We have got a reputation that draws customers from up to 60 miles away."

But over the years there have been plenty of changes. "In the old

days people came here just to buy things," said Mrs. Marjorie Roberts who has been on the staff since 1948. "Now they are able to browse around and obtain advice before they make their purchases."

Much Nicer

"At first I did not like the modern ways—I thought the old fashioned methods were best. But now I think things are so much nicer."

Outside work Mrs. Roberts enjoys walking and rambling. She is also a member of the local soroptomists and enjoys charity work.

This is an interest shared by assistant cook Mrs. Buddug Jones, who is a member of the Welsh Women's Institute. A fluent Welsh speaker she also sings with a local choir.

But at work she has got a reputation for being a comedienne. "I love to make people laugh," she said.

Dedicated

It's the dedication of the staff that

makes the Colwyn Bay store so successful. Very few people leave—they enjoy their work so much.

Mr. Christopher Saxton, one of only four men working at the store, started in March, 1938. He is 67 now and still works three days a week.

His hobby is gardening—when he retired the staff presented him with a greenhouse. And it is an interest which he shares with Mr. Bryant.

One of the youngest members is 22 year old Ann Edwards who joined the store straight from school. And she admits, "I love my work."

Winter Trek

Getting to the store means an eight mile journey every morning from her father's sheep farm in Llangernyw. It gets pretty tough in the winter when the snow is on the ground.

"But the snow plough always gets through in time," she said in typical Welsh humour; the sort of humour that makes our Colwyn Bay store a credit to the company.

CROWDS (AND COWS) ARE NOT FOR HIM

Arthur Jones of the Clayton Square Liverpool carpet department, spends his leisure time rambling, fell walking and climbing in the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, and the Derbyshire Peak District.

Mr. Jones says that all the areas are easily accessible in under an hour and a half, by motorway.

He has conquered all the Lake District peaks with the exception of the Old Man of Conistone. But he reckons his favourite area is the Yorkshire Dales. Whilst not so harsh as the Lakes or East Yorkshire they provide the ramblers with a constantly changing scenery. This

area is of course the background for the current best sellers of Yorkshire vet, James Herriot. And Mr. Jones has climbed Wharfedale, Ingleborough, and Pen-y-ghent.

Fast Exit

But he has found one problem. He does not see eye to eye with cattle. On one occasion while crossing a field with a friend he was chased by a herd of more than 30 cows. He says he has never made such a fast exit.

Away from the hustle and bustle of a busy store life Mr. Jones finds the peace and quiet of the country-



Mr. A. Jones

side an ideal relaxation. There is a certain affinity between fellow walkers that you don't find at seaside resorts or in towns, he says.

Crowded beaches with candyfloss and 'Kiss me quick' hats are not for him.

PAT ON THE BACK

"I am writing to you to express my gratitude for the service I received from a member of staff at your Kidderminster store. Service of this excellence is a rare virtue these days.

I telephoned your store just as you were closing and asked if you stocked silk braiding suitable for a dinner jacket.

The lady assistant I spoke to could not have been more helpful. She arranged for the goods I required to be left in the care of the receptionist at a local hotel, thus averting a minor domestic catastrophe.

I feel such superb service should not go unnoticed. Please find enclosed my cheque for £1.96p for goods received."

(Mr. K. A. Thomas)



Printing staff in the Silk Screen Section.

the right blend of ink to give the colour and now the boards are produced in the studio.

Retired THEY'LL BE MAKING



Miss K. McGrath has retired after 30 years service at our Store in London Road, Liverpool.

Miss McGrath started work in the Furnish Fabrics department in December 1945. She was later promoted to section head and then in 1962 she was promoted again to floor supervisor.

Central promotions may not be the largest department in the company but its work can be seen in our stores all over the country.

For manager Les Brownrigg and staff are responsible for turning out the posters, tickets, and cards that draw the customers' attention to our goods.

And with summer sale time just around the corner *Scene* decided to pay a visit to their studio in the T. J. Hughes building in London Road, Liverpool.

"In the next few weeks we will be producing about 40,000 cards for the sale alone," says Mr. Brownrigg. "Using in the process about three tons of card and paper and this is apart from our day to day promotions."

40,000 CARDS

The Summer Sale is the busiest time for the staff at Central Promotions

Theatre

Oldest man in the department is signwriter George Weigand. He is 62 and still as dedicated to his work as he was when as a boy of 14 he became an apprentice in the theatre, painting the background scenes for plays.

And his interest in art has stayed with him. When he finishes his work in the studio there is nothing he likes better than to set up his easel

Seconds out...

Overheard on the Children's wear Department in T. J. Hughes—London Road, Liverpool:

Customer: "I am returning this because its marked."

Assistant: "Well, they are all marked *Substandard, Madam.*"

Customer: "Well mine wasn't, the only label said *SECONDS.*"

High-Way

Comment on the new bridge at London Road:

Customer: "You are always moving things in this Store, I see you have put the subway up in the air now."

Fashion Show

More than 250 people turned up to watch our Weston-super-Mare staff put on a fashion show at a local school.

The models were all members of management and staff and the show was compered by Fashions sales manager, Mrs. Jean Romeo.

Wigs from the 'Ahead of Hair' range were also featured at the event which took place at the Milton Infants School in Weston-super-Mare.

and paint in oils. Landscapes and seascapes are his favourite but he can turn his hand to anything.

The Maseeley ticket section produces material for eight stores and central buyers every day.

The seven operatives print between them an average of 700—900 tickets a week for the whole organisation.

Teamwork is the secret behind the success of the department. John Sutton is the silk screen supervisor in charge of the silk screening press which when we called was turning out large advertising boards in the company's distinctive magenta colour.

"We all muck in together here," said Mr. Sutton. "If a job needs to be done we do it."

The company may well have lost its magenta colour if it was not for central promotions. The printers who used to print the boards suddenly decided they were not making any more.

Central promotions bought their whole stock and then set about finding a way to do the work themselves.

After three weeks of trial and error a printing company managed to find



Central Promotions manager Mr. Les Brownrigg.

Small Factory

In fact with sales time coming, the department looks more like a small factory than a studio.

And that means a lot of work for general assistant John Murray who at 17 years is one of the youngest on the staff. But he says it is all good training towards his goal of working in silk screen printing.

You will find him on the Kop in his spare time supporting league champions, Liverpool.

You Can Please Some of the People Some of the Time . . .

An able assistant had sold a suit to the value of £29.50 in the men's wear department. While he was wrapping the suit, the customer was busy counting out the money—£89.50 in all.

The much perplexed sales person looked at the amount, and thinking that the customer would be pleased at the saving, informed him that the suit only cost £29.50.

"Humph," came the reply, "I misheard you. If that is the case, I don't want it." And he left the store, ignoring the remonstrances of the sales person!

Mum's the word!

Mothers' Day proved to be quite a job for Rita Kelly, Faberge Consultant at Owen Owen, Coventry. For she had to wrap goods worth more than £220.

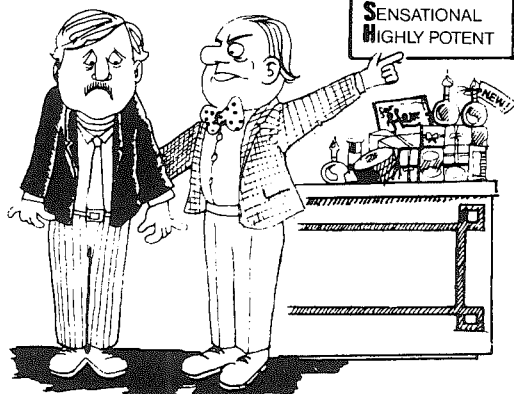
But Rita kept a smile on her face all through the day. And now, one of her regular customers

has written to Faberge to say just how much she is appreciated.

"Wonderful consultant, great sales lady, helpful and friendly, goes out of her way to help . . ." These were just some of the nice things she said about Rita.

FRAGRANCES

ROMANTIC
UNUSUAL
BREATHTAKING
BEAUTIFUL
IMPELLING
SENSATIONAL
HIGHLY POTENT



TELL THE DISPLAY MANAGER I'D LIKE A WORD WITH HIM!

FLOWER GIRLS



Taunton staff turned the clock back 20 years to help younger customers buy flowers for Mothering Sunday. Saturday girls Nicola Stiles and Jane Dolley dressed up as flower girls and sold daffodils to children for one penny a bunch.

NEWS from CANADA

The Store that created a street . . .

Ask any 'old timer' who is a native of Hamilton about the changes they've seen since they were a child. They'll go on for hours about the theatres and the restaurants which are just a

memory, the old city hall and the dozens of stores that once stood where a huge shopping mall flourishes now. There have been a lot of changes but there's one place that's been right in the centre just about as far back as anyone can remember . . . and that's Robinson's!

1899

Robinson's first opened its doors in 1899 before James Street South which is now one of the main business arteries of the city was scarcely recognized as a street. In fact, it's said that the story of Robinson's is the story of a Department Store that created a street.

Seventy-seven years ago when the present store was opened to the public, James Street South was a quiet backwater. Traffic by-passed it, and it was regarded by the businessmen of the day as

an off-beat location best suited to wholesaling and warehousing.

Conviction

The man with the pioneering spirit and the courage to swim against the stream of current thought, was the late G. W. Robinson. "G.W." was convinced that James Street South would eventually become one of the main business arteries of the growing city and, in his lifetime, he saw his dream come true. The business grew and James Street South grew with it, and because of it.

Carefully trained employees, quality merchandise and excellent service made Robinson's a fashionable place to shop. It became firmly fixed in the hearts of Hamiltonians as "The Shopping Centre" . . . the store where you could buy everything from a snow shovel to a Parisian hat.

Retired

In 1929 R. L. Smith, then Vice-President, bought the controlling interest in the firm and G. W. Robinson retired to become Chairman of the Board of Directors.

As Hamilton grew, the store under the leadership of R. L. Smith, and later his son Harold A. Smith, continued to move along in growth and public acceptance.

As the face of the city changed, great changes were also taking place in the way men thought about merchandising and in many subtle ways it was becoming increasingly difficult for the old family-type business to meet the heavy competition of the highly organised combines.

Bought by Owen Owen

In 1954 Robinson's was purchased by Owen Owen Limited. Determined to make G. W. Robinson's one of Canada's most up-to-date stores, no expense was spared to streamline the physical aspect of the building inside and out. A new store front, with non-reflecting windows, the latest in store fixtures, a high-speed escalator, and complete air-conditioning, were a few of the innovations.

Policy wise, the aim remained as it was when "G.W." first opened the doors . . . "The best possible merchandise for the lowest possible prices," honest advertising and genuine service. The renovations continued until the early 60's when the last of six full shopping floors was remodelled.

In 1961, after eighty-one years of business, Finch Brothers Limited, a prestigious Hamilton Department Store located just around the corner from the G. W. Robinson Company on King Street, closed its doors. Robinson's bought the store and its stock, and staged "one of the biggest sales in Hamilton's history" . . . a sale many of the long-time Robinson's employees still talk about today . . . It was truly a sale of sales!

"Budget Store"

The Finch store was joined to the main Robinson's Store by way of a passage off the second floor, and from 1962 to 1971 it was operated as a "Budget Store." It now houses Buyers Offices and Stockrooms.

In 1966 Robinson's opened its first Branch Store in the brand new Burlington Mall. The store was bright, airy and beautiful and, in contrast, the Downtown Hamilton Store looked dull and unattractive

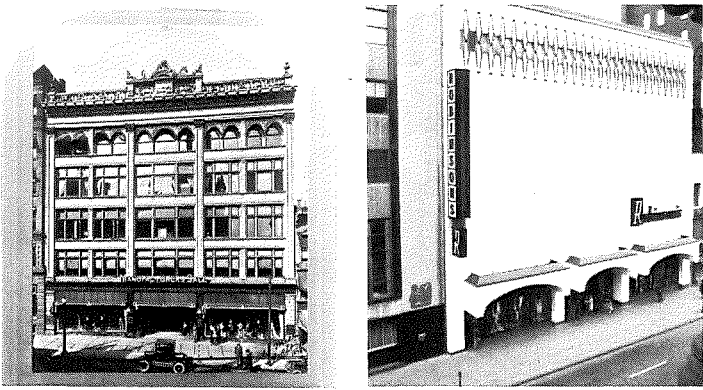
and so . . . another "beauty treatment" got under way. In 1970 the front of the store had another facelift and the windows were brought out to the street to give it the bright, modern department store image it has today.

Robinson's has grown with the city's core. Kept pace with the changes, and today . . . it's every bit as beautiful and modern as it's four offspring in local Malls.

And what's more important, Robinson's is still known throughout Hamilton as a "local store," with local Management, staffed by loyal people who really care about serving their customers . . . and, in many cases, their customers are also their friends.

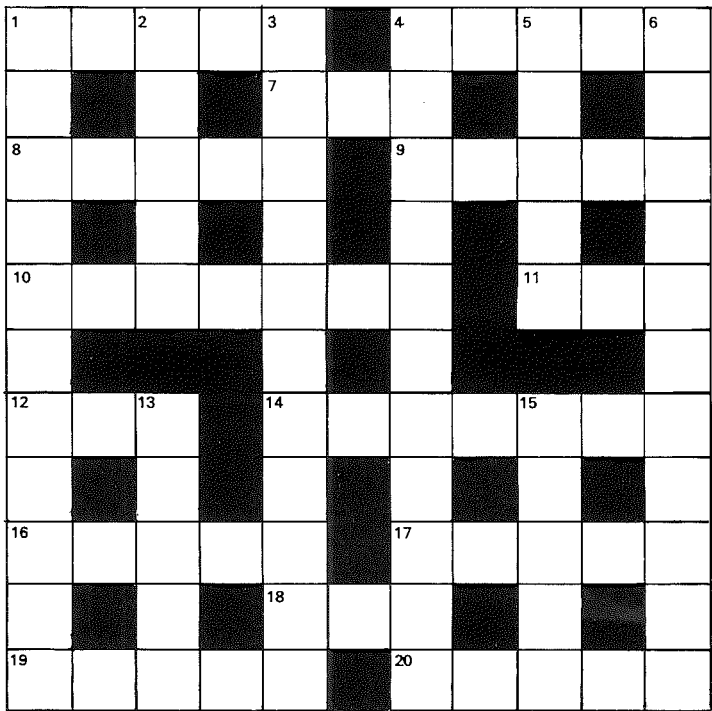
So, it's little wonder, in Hamilton . . . the Robinson's habit keeps growing.

Then and Now



The Robinson store in James Street South, as it was in 1918 (left) and as it is now—

SCENE CROSSWORD



CLUES

Across

- 1 Sag! It's nothing, drop around and see.
- 4 Might give you a lift.
- 7 Grand! perhaps.
- 8 Take a long look at your rates.
- 9 Girl on the drinks counter maybe.
- 10 About the noise?
- 11 Surrounded by shell.
- 12 Spelling, knitting or stinging variety.
- 14 No spine! For later recompense.
- 16 Hardly gallops, more like canters.
- 17 Frayed French film comedian.
- 18 Make, go further.
- 19 The Adder may fill you with it.
- 20 Or Sid will tell you her name.

Down

- 1 Buster did it, sent them all over the place.
- 2 Circles with the 'sat on' look.
- 3 Assumed to start with.
- 4 Acted indoor to keep the team in unison.
- 5 Get up?
- 6 Rainy days perhaps, or panics?
- 13 Call forth.
- 15 Deposit in the ground.



MUSICAL MANAGER

Mr. Serge Hocura, group merchandise manager of Robinson's has seen the company grow from one store in Down Town Hamilton to a five store chain which is a major factor in the retail business on the Niagara peninsula.

He joined the company in January 1962 as Furniture and mattress buyer. Eventually he took on the major appliance and home entertainments group as well. Then in 1974 he was appointed group merchandise manager of all the big ticket and hardline departments.

Family

Married with three children Mr. Hocura lives in Burlington, and in his spare time he enjoys going to the theatre, reading, photography, and music.

His musical interests have rubbed off on his children. "Between them they play a variety of instruments including the guitar, piano, saxophone and clarinet," he said.

Daughter Laura, aged 17, is hoping to go to McMaster University later this year to study medicine and his other daughter, Liza, aged 15 is hoping to make a name for herself on the stage. She has already appeared in productions at the Burlington Little Theatre. His son Stephen, aged 20, has not decided on a career yet.

Stepping out in style



Stepping out in style is Mrs. Isolde Elter at the Robinson's fashion workshop.

Robinson's sales staff are taking to the cat walk to model the latest fashion styles for their fellow employees.

And the twice yearly shows are proving to be a big hit with the staff who are getting to know in advance just what the customers will be looking for.

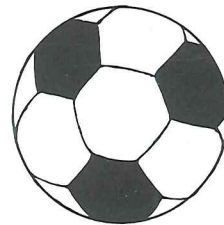
The 'workshops' are conducted by the company's advertising manager, Mrs. Carol Weir who feels that it is important that staff should have the best training possible. But it's not all work, those who attend also enjoy wine and cheese.

And they are looking forward to the next workshop in September.

WINNING WAYS

Congratulations to our Kidderminster netball team who have come out top of their local league by winning all but one of their 14 games.

And the team received a further honour when the Kidderminster League chose team player Anne Laidlaw as Miss Netball, 1975. The full team is pictured left to right, front row: Janet Smith, Gillian Price (Secretary), and Carol Crumpton. Back Row: Jackie Kelly (Captain), Anne Laidlaw, Pam Hooper and Stephanie Mauer.



A pretty sight on any court, the Kidderminster League Miss Netball, 1975, Anne Laidlaw.



A BIG SECRET

the group is able to get lower prices because of big buying. Although the managers buy locally they can purchase at group terms.

"The catering department doesn't have a central buyer and the two Food Halls in the group are separate from Catering.

"With inflation the pattern of lunchtime eating has changed. Traditional menus like roast beef and two veg. are being priced out and being replaced by snack items. Customers have also become quite diet conscious which has led to lighter meals.

"The catering business, possibly more than any other depends on the sort of relationship that exists between staff and customers. That is where we score. We have a good standard of staff who take a genuine interest in keeping customers happy. This is very important in a country where standards of service are at a pretty low level."

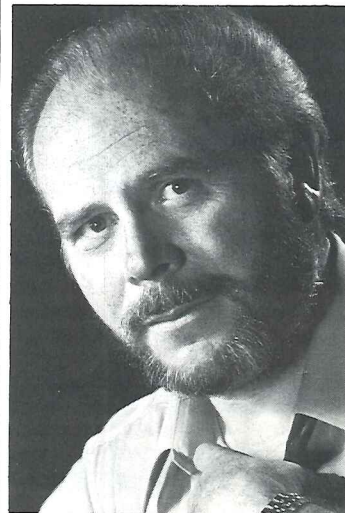
Experiments

And Mr. Lloyd should know. He is a member of the Hotel, Catering and Institutional Managers Association and one of his interests is in good food and wine. "I like good food and wine, I like food which is different, I prefer to experiment rather than stick to the same dishes."

Mr. Lloyd, it should be mentioned served for three years in the army before going on to University. "I realised I had the advantage of being a little more mature than most undergraduates and I was there to work."

Max Factor Consultant Antonia Mather kept a big secret from her friends at our store in Clayton Square, Liverpool. She told no one that her brother, opera singer Alberto Remedios was going to be the subject of Thames Television's "This is Your Life."

Only after she had travelled to London for the programme did she admit: "I knew about it all the time."



The programme also gave her the chance to meet all her relations including a cousin from Australia she has never seen before. After the recording they were entertained at a party which went on until midnight. "When it was all over I felt like Cinderella at the Ball. We all parted amidst kisses and tears of happiness to face reality once again," she said.

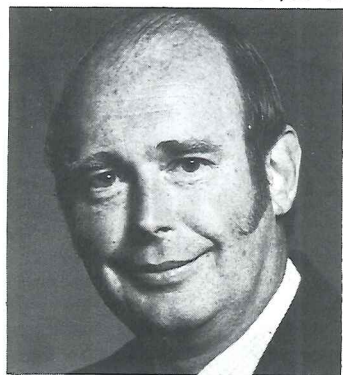


EATING UP THE MILES

Academically speaking geography, bridge and catering seem to have little in common. But 48 year old Mr. Mervyn Lloyd, who joined us a year ago as catering director can claim to be an expert in all three.

At Jesus College, Oxford he graduated in Geography—and has an M.A. to prove it. But, as Mr. Lloyd points out, that particular degree is only really useful if you want to become a school teacher or an explorer. He didn't want to do either.

The main advantage of a University education is that it trains you to



think logically. So Mr. Lloyd decided to put his education to good use by entering a business that has always attracted him. He joined Marks & Spencer as a graduate management trainee.

"M. & S. tend to put many trainees into the Retail Food department. Most of them don't like it. I was an exception, I preferred it to the other departments."

After two years he saw that Lewis's were recruiting trainees for food and catering and he joined them in Leeds. He spent five years with them, the last two as manager of restaurants, before moving to Dingles, the Plymouth department store group as Catering Controller. During this period of his career Mr. Lloyd was responsible for outside catering events which included banquets attended by the Queen and Prince Philip.

Royal Trifle

"I remember on one occasion we were all intrigued when the Duke of Edinburgh had a long conversation with one of the waitresses.

... that's our Catering Director Mr. Mervyn Lloyd ...

It turned out that they were discussing the merits of the sherry trifle!"

He was with Dingles, which included Howells of Cardiff, for 16 years—"I might not have stayed so long but for the attraction of living in beautiful Devon"—and during that time the firm was bought by the House of Fraser.

Mr. Lloyd came to Owen Owen in January last year as Director of Catering and worked for four months with his predecessor.

In his current role he is responsible for 30 managers and 600 staff in 27 public restaurants and 21 staff restaurants in 22 stores.

In his 16 months with the group he has motored 40,000 miles from places as far apart as Southampton and Colwyn Bay.

"I suppose only 20 per cent of my time is spent in Liverpool. The remainder goes in visiting the stores," says Mr. Lloyd.

And he leaves restaurant managers as much freedom as possible to prepare their own menus based on their knowledge of local demand although he has to approve the menus before they are implemented.

Although the big increase in wages over the past two or three years has an enormous impact on the charges for meals with the resulting problems of attracting customers Mr. Lloyd is privately very pleased that wages have gone up.

"Previously wages in the catering industry were too low for a job which involves hard work and great pressure, particularly at lunchtimes."

Cost of Meals

"Wages have been the main reason for pushing up the cost of meals and they represent one-third of the selling price. Food takes another third, then gas, electricity, crockery and cutlery, stationery, laundry, cleaning and other overheads also have to be paid for. But food—despite what a housewife might think—is gone up less than wages. This is because

Made up



Edna Reeves the Max Factor Consultant at our Bath store won a holiday for two for achieving a 138 per cent increase in sales over target.

She beat other consultants in the south-west area to win the prize in the 'Rich Rewards' quarterly competition.

The area also won a Silver Rose Bowl for the highest increase in sales in the country.

SAVING

It may be summer but staff at our Birkenhead store are already preparing for Christmas.

They are each putting away two-pence a week in a large sweet jar in the canteen. And they plan to use the money to buy Christmas presents and trees for local old folk and children.

Last year with the help of a raffle they raised £75, and they are hoping to do even better this year.

Night out

T. J. Hughes staff at Bootle New Strand who enjoyed a night out at the Chester celebrity club in April have been invited back this month free of charge. And interest in the trip is now so great that they have had to order a larger coach.



Smart Girls

Saleswoman Miss Hilda Williams has retired from our Chester store after 46 years' service, first with Richard Jones and in later years with Owen Owen.

Although she was only a teenager when she joined the store she still remembers her first day at work. "Some of the clients arrived at the main entrance in chauffeur driven cars," she said. "One or two were still using horses and traps; there were no traffic problems in those days.

Long Gowns

"The girls in the fashion showroom wore long black gowns. They all looked very smart and much older than the teenage girls of today."

Miss Williams says she is sorry to be leaving us. "I am leaving behind so many good friends," she explained.